



# City Council Report

**Date:** November 6, 2023  
**To:** City Council  
**Through:** Marc Heirshberg, Deputy City Manager  
**From:** Chris Hassert, Water Resources Director  
**Subject:** Application to renew (modify) Mesa's Designation of Assured Water Supply, Citywide

## Purpose and Recommendation

To recommend the Mesa City Council approve a resolution to authorize the submittal of a renewal (modification) of the City's Designation of Assured Water Supply to the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR).

## Background

The Assured Water Supply Program operates within Arizona's five Active Management Areas including Maricopa, Pinal, Pima, Santa Cruz, and Yavapai counties. The Assured Water Supply is designed to sustain the state's economic health by preserving groundwater resources and promoting long-term water supply planning.

The 1980 Groundwater Management Act requires cities to demonstrate a 100-year Assured Water Supply (renewable water resources) for any proposed new development. The City of Mesa's current Designation demonstrates sufficient renewable water supplies to meet current and projected demands through 2025. ADWR requires that City must submit an application to renew (or modify) its existing Designation by the end of calendar year 2023 for renewal in 2025.

After ADWR makes a determination, based on hydrogeologic modeling and supporting documentation of the amount of groundwater and banked surface water available to an individual water provider, that groundwater is no longer available for use by other water providers. The City is requesting a 15-year term for the renewed Designation.

The Arizona Assured Water Supply statutes require the City to submit a resolution of its governing body authorizing the City Manager or designee to sign the application.

## Discussion

Mesa's most recent Designation of an Assured Water Supply was granted in 2010. To receive a renewal of its Designation of Assured Water Supply for another 15 years, Mesa must demonstrate that it has legal and physical availability of water

along with water quality and financial capability standards to meet its currently committed demand and projected build-out demand. Mesa must also show that it has enough water to meet this demand for one hundred (100) years.

Since the 2010 Designation, the City has acquired and is pursuing several additional water sources, including CAP supplies, reclaimed water supplies, and Salt River supplies. Mesa will be able to demonstrate all requirements to receive a renewal of its Designation of Assured Water Supply.

### **Alternatives**

Not approve the request for resolution: Council could choose not to approve the request for resolution. Doing so would result in Mesa not submitting the Designation of Assured Water Supply application. In 2025, Mesa's current Designation would expire which would be detrimental to the health and safety of the aquifer and Mesa's ability to prosper and meet water demands. There is some risk that Mesa could lose scarce groundwater supplies to other providers.

Take no action: Council could choose to take no action or table the item until a future date. This would result in a delay to submit the application and possibly miss the 2023 end-of-year deadline.

### **Fiscal Impact**

Internal staff prepared the Designation of Assured Water Supply application. The application fee to modify Mesa's Designation is \$2,000. An application review fee may be charged up to a maximum fee of \$35,000.

### **Coordinated With**

This report and the requested Council resolution were coordinated with the Water Resources Department and the City Attorney's office.